

The Wichita Airport Authority

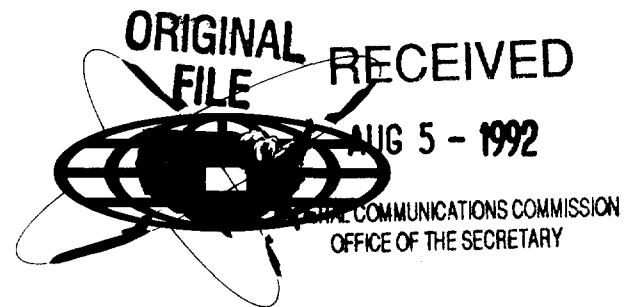
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July 31, 1992



Wichita Mid-Continent Airport & Colonel James Jabara Airport

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Ms. Donna R. Searcy
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, N.W.
Room 222
Washington, DC 20554

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AUG 4 1992

FCC MAIL BRANCH

RE: Docket 92-77

Dear Ms. Searcy:

On behalf of the Wichita Airport Authority (WAA), I would like to present our position on the Notice of the Proposed Rulemaking (Docket 92-77) concerning Billed Party Preference (BPP). The WAA operates Wichita Mid-Continent Airport which provides service to over 1.2 million passengers per year.

Located throughout the airport are approximately 75 pay telephones for use by the traveling public which are owned and operated by the WAA. These locations are strategically placed to facilitate convenience and ease of use. Therefore, any proposed ruling that could adversely affect the quality of service or revenue due the WAA is of great interest.

The WAA has utilized many resources and invested substantial monies to ensure the travel public receives the greatest service possible at Wichita Mid-Continent. According to the information that we have received, the implementation of BPP will adversely affect the service our travelers receive. For example, it has been determined that our travelers desire the ability to utilize a commercial credit card to place a telephone call. In fact, the need to provide this service was so great that it became one of the deciding factors in the decision for the WAA to own and operate the pay telephones. Our local exchange company, Southwestern Bell would not provide instruments which allowed commercial credit cards, therefore the WAA made the decision to purchase and operate the phones. Testimony has been presented during this docket that the implementation of BPP will eliminate this option to our travelers. At the very least, BPP will require "live" operator assistance which will delay the time it takes to complete a call and most likely, significantly increase the cost

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as well. Commercial credit card calls made from the phones at Mid-Continent represent over 10% of the total calls made from the airport. To provide lesser service for this percentage of the public is not acceptable.

Another concern for the WAA is the projected call set-up time to process a call with Billed Party Preference. The additional time required to process the call will most assuredly cause passenger dissatisfaction and lines at the public pay telephones. Because of space constraints within the terminal, simply installing additional telephones is not an alternative. The situation of customers queuing up at the pay phones will cause traffic flow problems as well as safety concerns. These are two of the major service concerns that the WAA has concerning BPP.

As previously mentioned, there are 75 pay telephones installed at the airport which provide over \$100,000 per year in revenue to the WAA. Should BPP be approved, our interexchange carrier (IXC) has informed the WAA that compensation will no longer be paid for interLATA calls.

Ms. Searcy, the revenue received from the pay telephone concession is used by the WAA to maintain and operate the airport. As you are aware, Wichita Mid-Continent Airport operates as an enterprise fund whereby the users of the airport compensate the Authority for the use of facilities. This method of operation allows the WAA to provide a world class airport without relying on any tax revenue from the general public. Should this revenue be eliminated, the shortfall will have to be recovered from the other tenants of the Airport or the general public in the form of an airport tax. Many of these tenants are already experiencing financial problems, e.g. America West Airlines, Continental Airlines, etc. Shifting additional financial responsibilities to these companies is not only unfair but goes against our charter that states that all users of the airport must fairly compensate the Authority for utilizing the airport. Imposing an airport tax on the general public to recover lost income would be unfair to the citizens of Wichita and our market area.

Recent court rulings, including the United States Supreme Court in Alamo Rent-A-Car vs. Sarasota Manatee Airport Authority have stated that, (sic) "requiring users of the airport facilities and those who generate income from the airport are required to compensate the airport". Enacting Billed Party Preference without requiring the long distance carriers to compensate the airport appears to be in direct contrast to these recent court findings.

Should fair compensation not be provided, the WAA will be forced to utilize much of the current pay telephone space for other concessions to replace the revenue which will disappear as a result of Billed Party Preference.

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In conclusion, the Wichita Airport Authority is strongly opposed to Billed Party Preference and believes that our current operation which provides equal access from the public phones is sufficient. Implementing Billed Party Preference without mandating fair compensation to the location owner is unjust and may be in violation of recent State and Federal court rulings. Therefore, the WAA respectfully requests that the Federal Communications Commission not implement Billed Party Preference and continue to allow the current operation of equal access and owner selection of the primary interexchange carrier continue.

Sincerely,

THE WICHITA AIRPORT AUTHORITY



Dwight W. Greenlee
Director of Airport Administration

DWG/jd